

VERTIGO



WINNER OF
EISNERS

FABLES

NO.

AUG 06

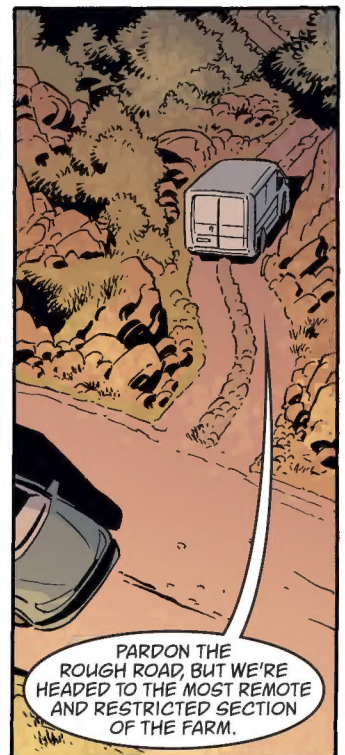
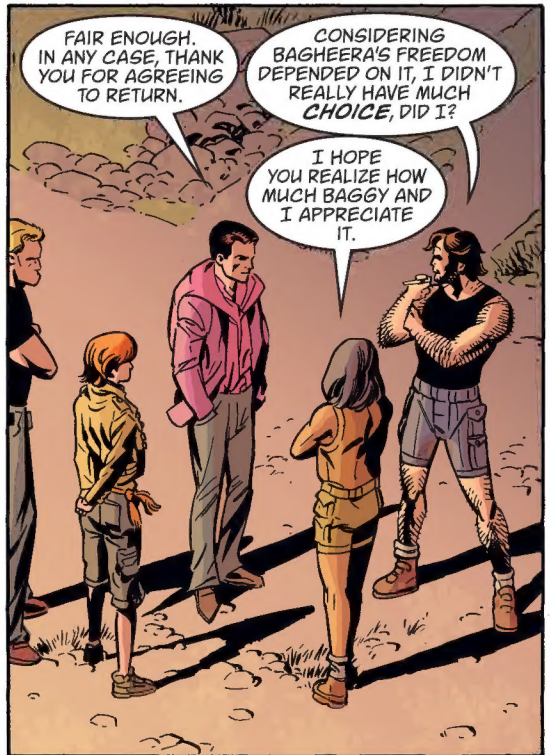
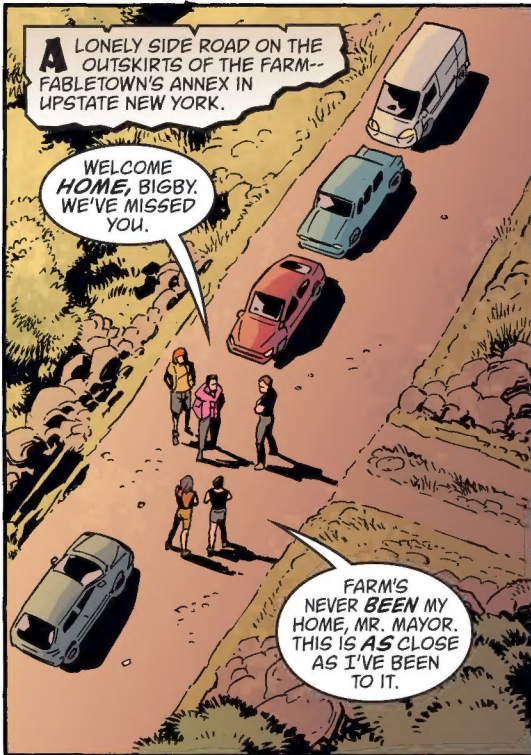
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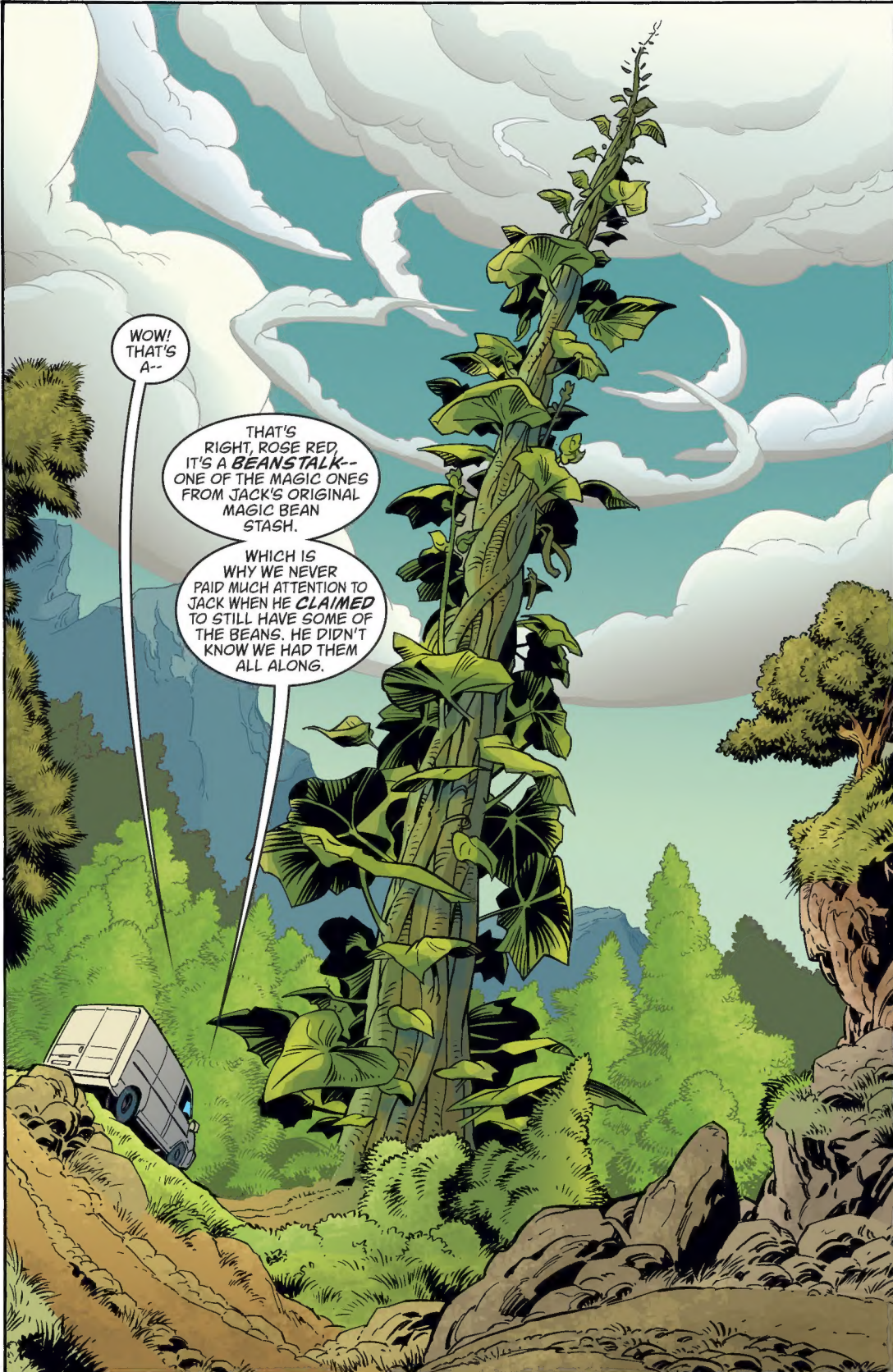
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WILLINGHAM
BUCKINGHAM
LEIALOHA
PEPOY

CHAPTER ONE: SECRET AGENT MAN

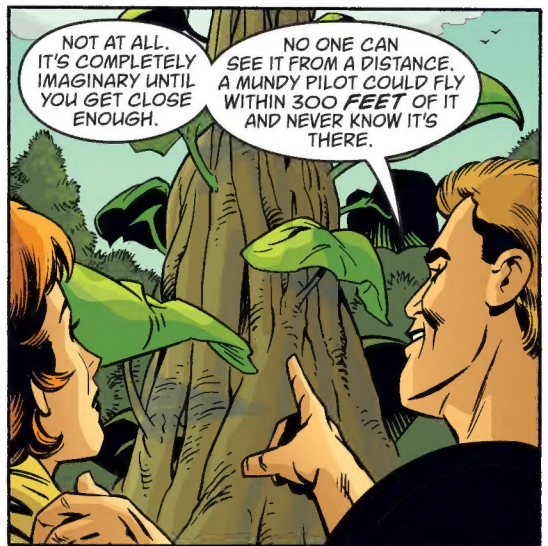
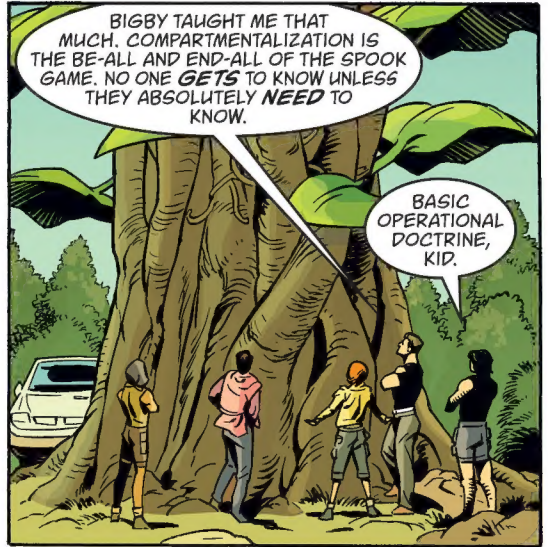




WOW!
THAT'S
A--

THAT'S
RIGHT, ROSE RED.
IT'S A **BEANSTALK**--
ONE OF THE MAGIC ONES
FROM JACK'S ORIGINAL
MAGIC BEAN
STASH.

WHICH IS
WHY WE NEVER
PAID MUCH ATTENTION TO
JACK WHEN HE **CLAIMED**
TO STILL HAVE SOME OF
THE BEANS. HE DIDN'T
KNOW WE HAD THEM
ALL ALONG.





THOUGH THE ROOTS ARE FIRMLY IN OUR WORLD, SOMEWHERE ALONG THE WAY IT ENDS UP POKING ITSELF INTO THE CLOUD KINGDOMS.

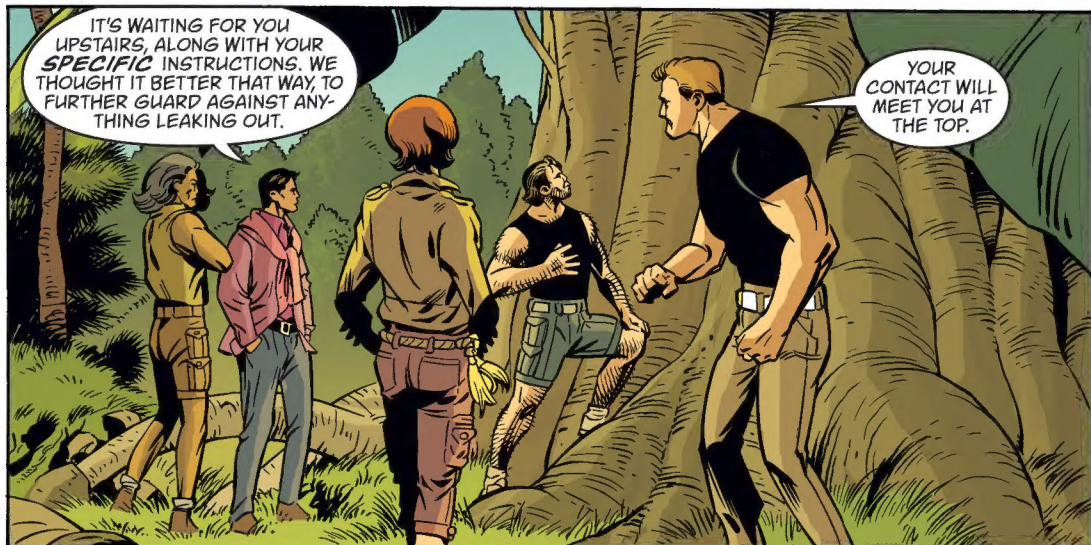
THIS IS ALL VERY INFORMATIVE, BUT CAN WE GET TO THE PRACTICAL BUSINESS?



I ASSUME I'M GOING TO CLIMB THIS THING?

EXACTLY.

WHERE'S MY GEAR?



IT'S WAITING FOR YOU UPSTAIRS, ALONG WITH YOUR SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS. WE THOUGHT IT BETTER THAT WAY, TO FURTHER GUARD AGAINST ANYTHING LEAKING OUT.

YOUR CONTACT WILL MEET YOU AT THE TOP.



THEN I MIGHT AS WELL GET STARTED.

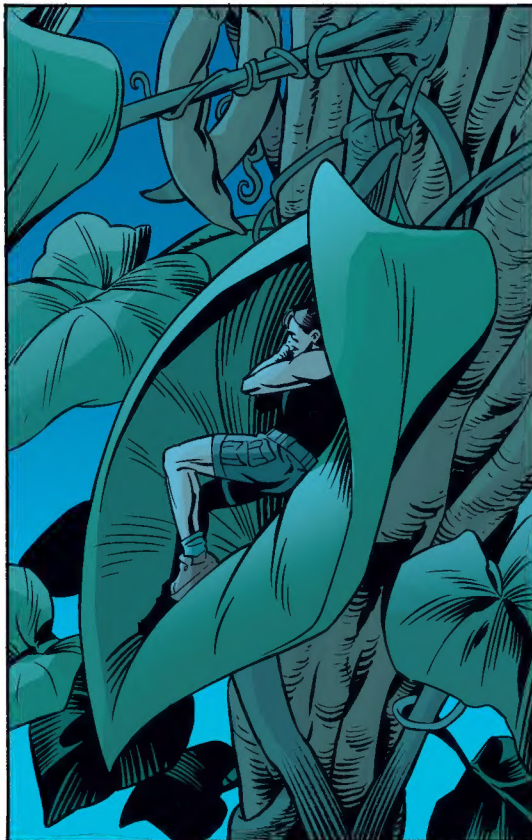
ARE YOU SURE THERE ISN'T ANYTHING YOU WANT ME TO TELL SNOW?

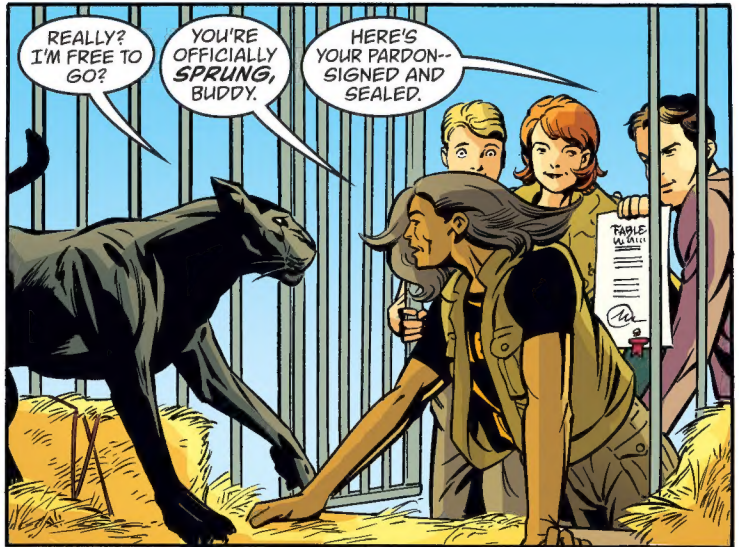
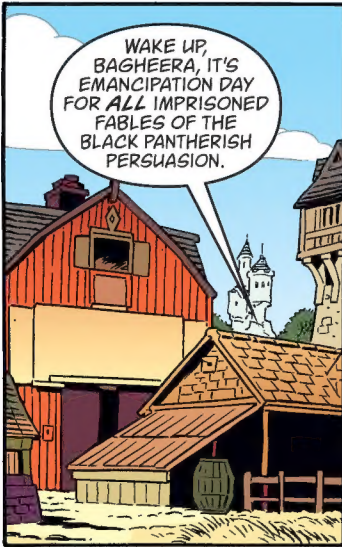
I'M SURE, ROSE.



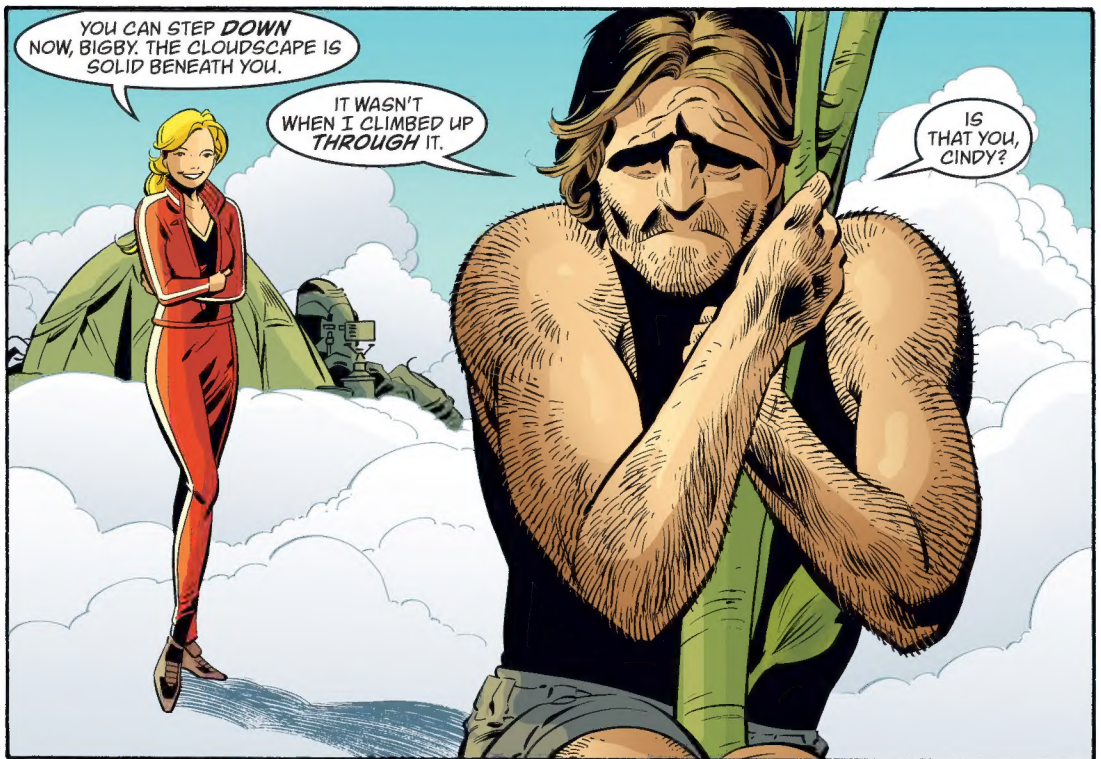
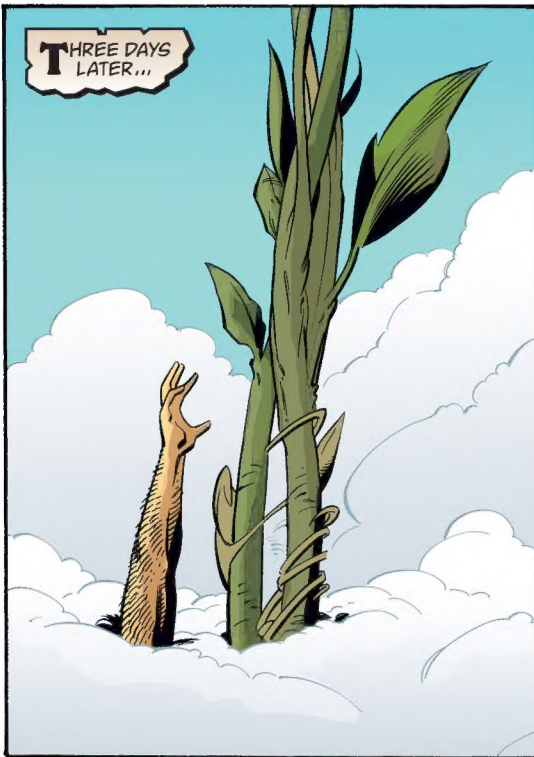
IF I DON'T RETURN, I WAS NEVER HERE IN THE FIRST PLACE.

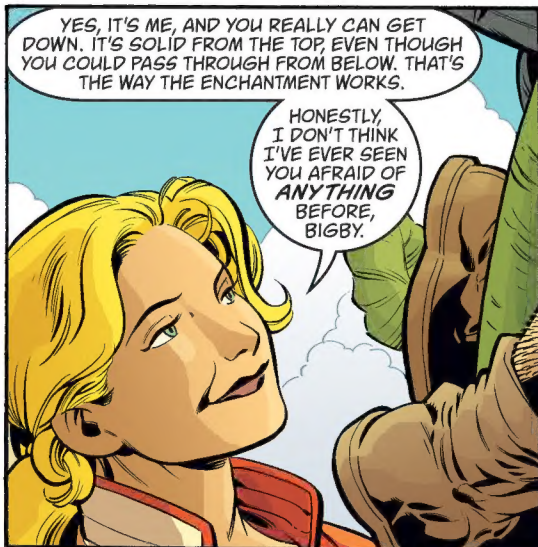
IF I DO, I CAN TELL HER MYSELF.





CHAPTER TWO: CASTLES IN THE SKY



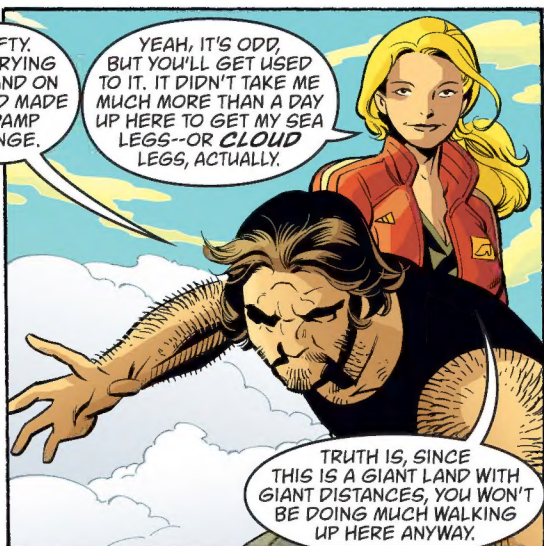




VERY FUNNY. YOU'VE GOT QUITE A **CRUEL** STREAK IN YOU, CINDY.

WHICH IS WHY WE ALWAYS GOT ALONG SO WELL. HOW DOES IT FEEL?

SHIFTY. LIKE TRYING TO STAND ON GROUND MADE OF DAMP SPONGE.



YEAH, IT'S ODD, BUT YOU'LL GET USED TO IT. IT DIDN'T TAKE ME MUCH MORE THAN A DAY UP HERE TO GET MY SEA LEGS--OR **CLOUD** LEGS, ACTUALLY.

TRUTH IS, SINCE THIS IS A GIANT LAND WITH GIANT DISTANCES, YOU WON'T BE DOING MUCH WALKING UP HERE ANYWAY.



RADISKOP!

YES, CINDERELLA?

CAN YOU INFORM OUR HOST THAT THE GUEST OF HONOR HAS ARRIVED?

YOU BETCHA!



HE SEEMS ENTHUSIASTIC.

RADY'S A BIG SWEETHEART.

BIG IS RIGHT-BIG ENOUGH TO SWALLOW US **BOTH** IN TWO OR THREE BITES.



HELP ME BREAK CAMP WHILE WE WAIT FOR OUR TRANSPORT TO ARRIVE.

WE WON'T BE COMING BACK THIS WAY.



LESS THAN AN HOUR LATER...

YOUNG HUMBERJON IS TAKING US TO THE WIZARD ULMORE'S CASTLE. THAT'S OUR STAGING AREA FOR THE MISSION.

NICE VIEW.



HERE, WE'LL BE AWHILE GETTING THERE, SO YOU CAN START READING. THESE ARE YOUR MISSION ORDERS.



YOU HAVE TO MEMORIZE ALL OF YOUR INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE YOU GO. WE CAN'T LET YOU TAKE THE **PHYSICAL** DOCUMENTS WITH YOU.

STANDARD PROCEDURE.

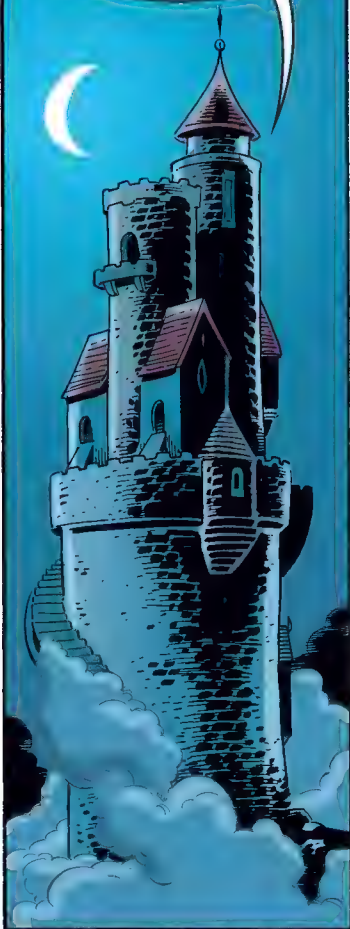


Operation: ISRAEL.
Stage One: Preparation.

You will make contact with your Mission Operator at the summit, who will direct you to friendly elements in the Cloud Kingdoms.

Your primary contact among the giants will be the wizard Ulmore, who will prepare you for insertion.

SINCE YOU'RE NOT A MAGICIAN, I'LL HAVE TO TRY TO EXPLAIN THINGS TO YOU IN LAYMAN'S TERMS.



Extreme care should be taken not to do or say anything that might jeopardize the new and fragile diplomatic relations between Fabletown and the Cloud Kingdoms.

EVEN THOUGH THE CLOUD KINGDOMS EXIST IN THEIR OWN DIMENSION, IN A SEEMINGLY PARADOXICAL WAY THEY ALSO EXIST IN THE SKY OVER EVERY KNOWN WORLD.



Securing them as allies is vastly more important than the needs of this particular mission.

THERE'S A CORRESPONDING LOCATION UP HERE FOR ANY LOCATION DOWN BELOW, WHETHER IN YOUR MUNDY WORLD OR ANY WORLD OF THE EMPIRE.

OUR TASK, THEN, IS TO FIND THE LOCATION THAT LOOKS DOWN ON THEIR IMPERIAL CAPITAL.



AND JUST DROP DOWN ON THEM FROM ABOVE?

PRECISELY. TO DATE, THE ONLY WAY TO BRIDGE DIMENSIONS FROM BELOW, COMING UPWARDS, IS TO TRAVEL VIA ONE OF THE MAGIC BEANSTALKS.





THAT'S KEPT US **SAFE** SO FAR FROM THE ADVERSARY'S ARMIES.

BUT THE DIMENSIONAL DOORWAYS ARE ALWAYS OPEN GOING IN THE OTHER DIRECTION.



THREE DAYS LATER...

WE SHOULDN'T NEED ANYTHING BUT **GRAVITY** TO DO THE TRICK.

ARE YOU READY TO GO, **BIGBY**? GOT ALL YOUR EQUIPMENT?

THE **HOLE'S** DUG, SIR.



I ALMOST SLIPPED THROUGH IT MYSELF.

I HOPE SO. THERE'S NO ROOM FOR ANYTHING ELSE.



BETTER HOLD YOUR HAND DIRECTLY OVER THE HOLE, **UL MORE**. I CAN'T JUMP VERY **FAR** UNDER ALL THIS WEIGHT.

BE CARELESS DOWN THERE!

Stage Two:
Insertion.

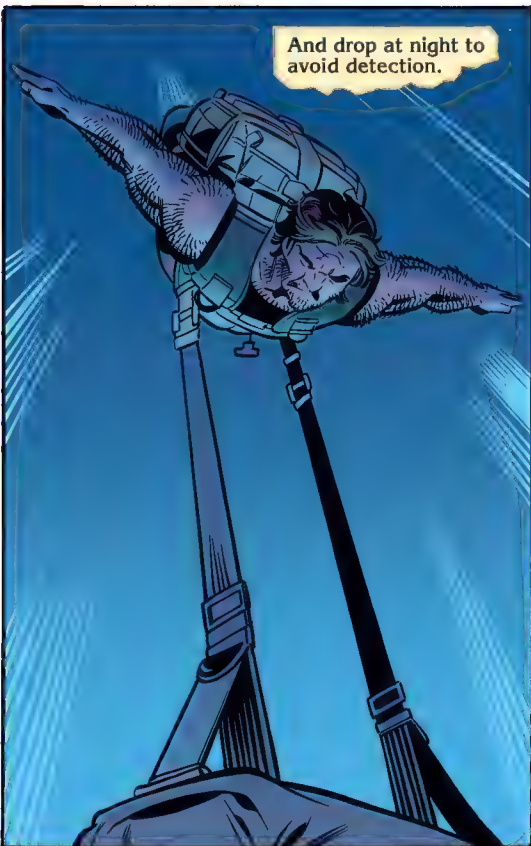
You will parachute
into the Empire
district of Calabri
Anagni.



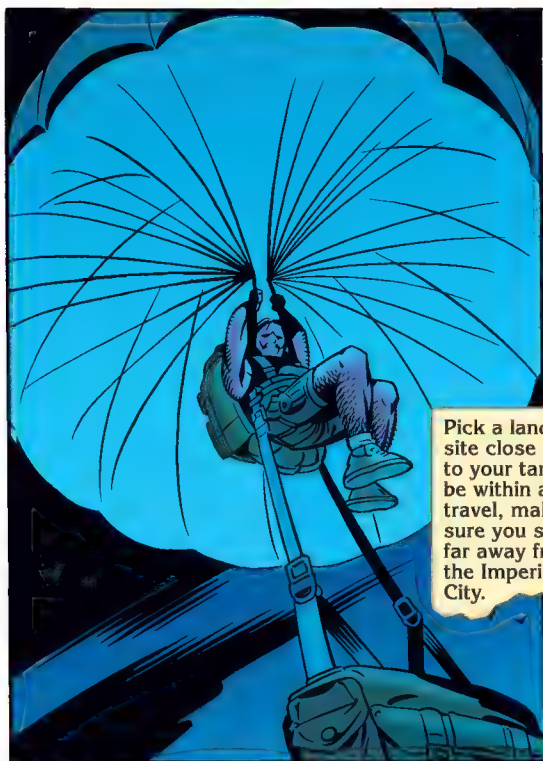
Be sure to
pick a
wilderness
location for
your drop
zone.



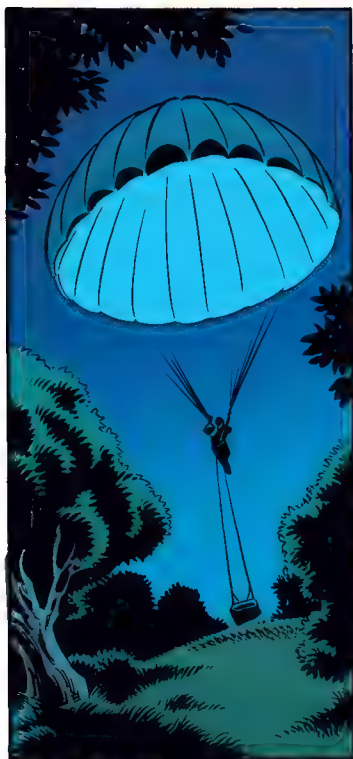
And drop at night to
avoid detection.



CHAPTER THREE: BEHIND ENEMY LINES



Pick a landing site close enough to your target to be within a day's travel, making sure you stay far away from the Imperial City.



Immediately bury your expended chute and reserve chute pack. You won't be needing them any longer.

Inspect all remaining gear.

Plant your extraction bean in some remote location. Take note that it will take approximately twelve hours to fully deploy.



Travel only at night.



Avoid all enemy contact.



If you arrive at the target site during daylight hours, wait until late the next night to begin operations.

Stage Three:
Preliminary
Objectives.



First
remove
all guards
from the
area.





DEVIL
SPAWN!



WHAT'S
THIS?

DIRE
SORCERY!

NOT AT ALL,
GENTLEMEN.



IT'S
JUST MY SON,
GUARDING MY
BACK.

YOU CAN
DROP THEM NOW,
BOY. I'M READY
FOR THEM.

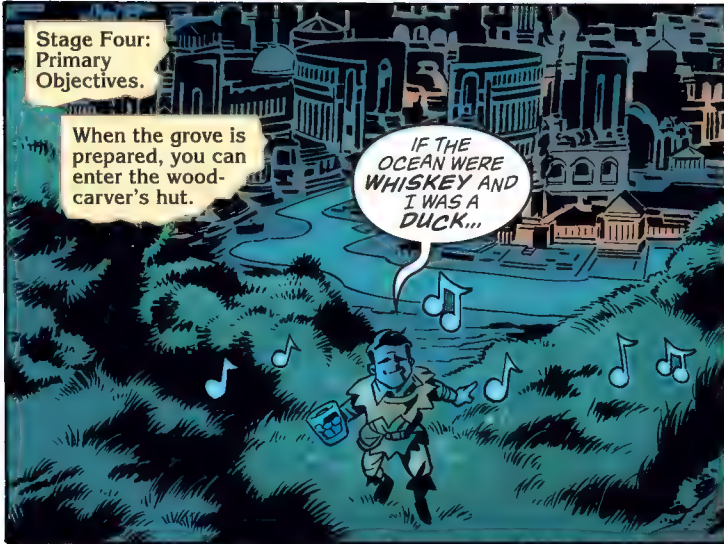
Next enter the grove of magic trees and prepare them with the Special Packages—spaced for maximum effect.



Stage Four:
Primary
Objectives.

When the grove is prepared, you can enter the wood-carver's hut.

IF THE OCEAN WERE WHISKEY AND I WAS A DUCK...



...I'D DIVE TO THE BOTTOM AND DRINK IT ALL UP!

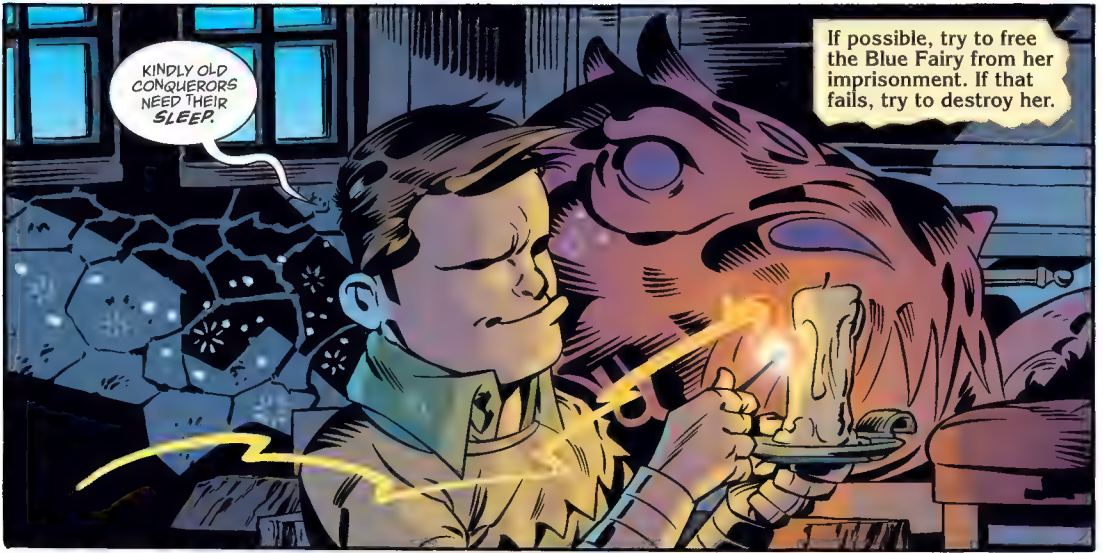


B-BE VERY QUIET NOW, PIN-HIC: PINOCCHIO.



SHHHHHH, MR. WOODY OWL. IT'S VERY IMPORTANT WE DON'T WAKE MY DA--MY DA--DON'T WAKE THE EVIL, BLOODY-HANDED ADVERSARY.





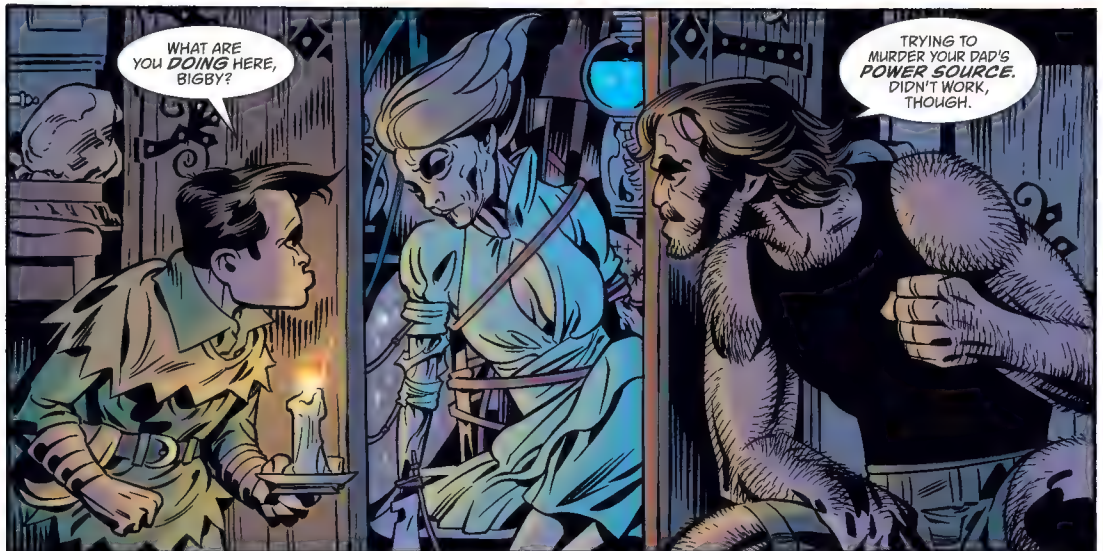
KINDLY OLD CONQUERORS NEED THEIR SLEEP.

If possible, try to free the Blue Fairy from her imprisonment. If that fails, try to destroy her.



BIGBY?

SHHHHHHHH, PINOCCHIO. GEPPETTO'S SLEEPING ONLY TWO ROOMS AWAY, AND WE DON'T WANT TO WAKE HIM.



WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, BIGBY?

TRYING TO MURDER YOUR DAD'S POWER SOURCE. DIDN'T WORK, THOUGH.



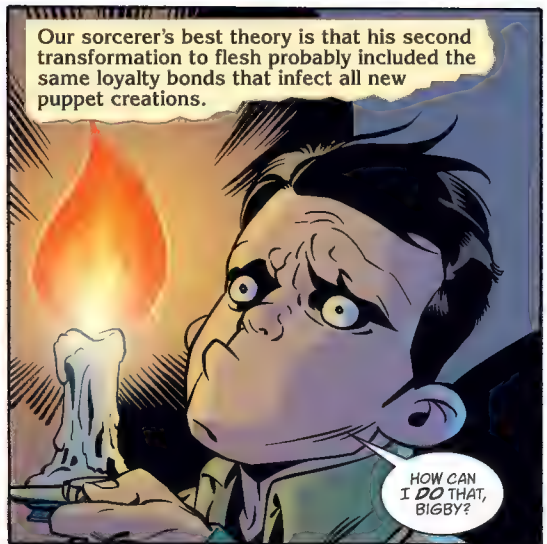
THE SPELLS PROTECTING HER ARE NEARLY AS COMPLEX AS THOSE PROTECTING MY DAD.

THE VERY SAME CONCLUSION I CAME TO ABOUT TWENTY SECONDS AGO.



Only if an opportunity presents itself, without jeopardizing the main mission, attempt to recruit Pinocchio into returning with you to Fabletown.

I ALSO CAME TO GET YOU, IF YOU'RE READY TO COME HOME NOW.



Our sorcerer's best theory is that his second transformation to flesh probably included the same loyalty bonds that infect all new puppet creations.

HOW CAN I DO THAT, BIGBY?



MY GOODNESS.

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

GEPPETTO!

OH, NO!

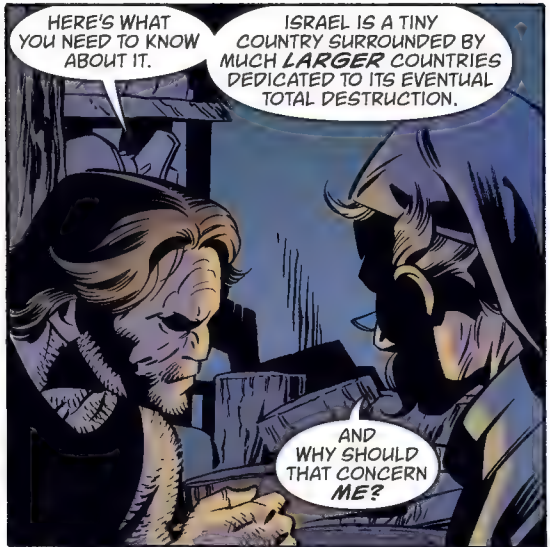
CHAPTER FOUR: THE ISRAEL ANALOGY





EVER HEAR OF A COUNTRY CALLED **ISRAEL**?

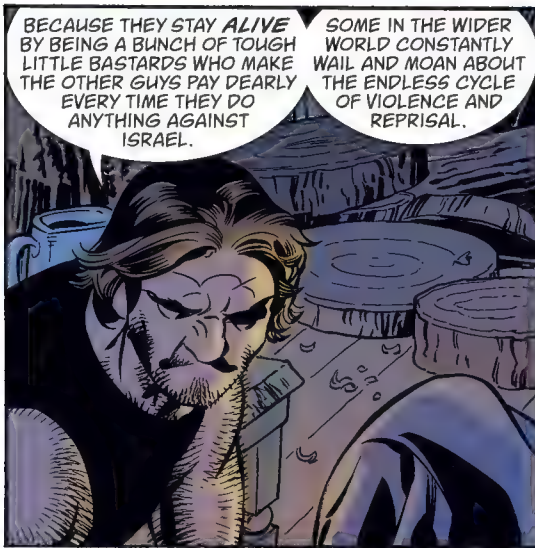
WHO KNOWS? MAYBE. WHY'S THAT IMPORTANT?



HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT IT.

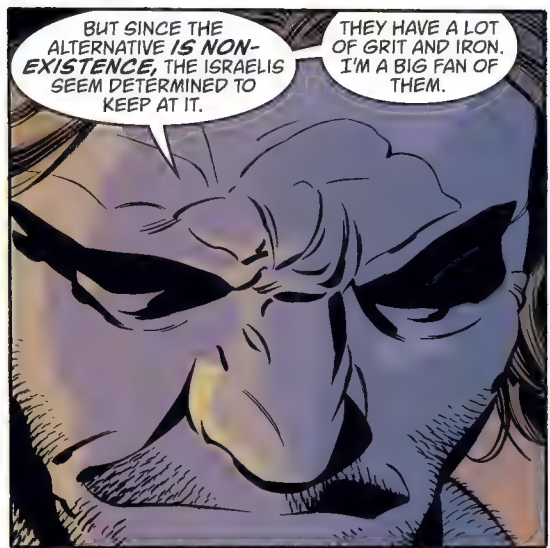
ISRAEL IS A TINY COUNTRY SURROUNDED BY MUCH **LARGER** COUNTRIES DEDICATED TO ITS EVENTUAL TOTAL DESTRUCTION.

AND WHY SHOULD THAT CONCERN **ME**?



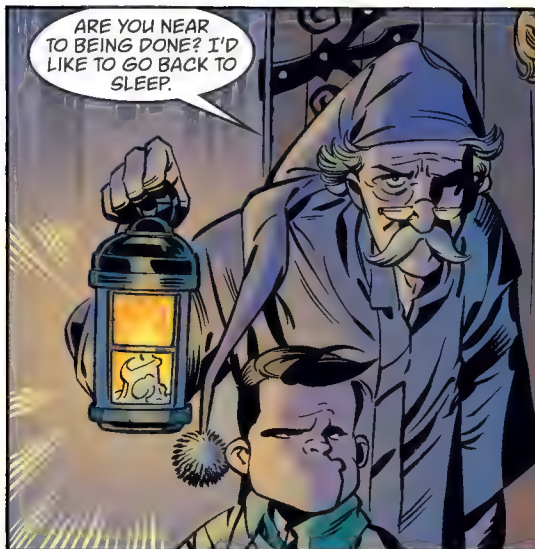
BECAUSE THEY STAY **ALIVE** BY BEING A BUNCH OF TOUGH LITTLE BASTARDS WHO MAKE THE OTHER GUYS PAY DEARLY EVERY TIME THEY DO ANYTHING AGAINST **ISRAEL**.

SOME IN THE WIDER WORLD CONSTANTLY WAIL AND MOAN ABOUT THE ENDLESS CYCLE OF VIOLENCE AND REPRISAL.



BUT SINCE THE **ALTERNATIVE IS NON-EXISTENCE**, THE ISRAELIS SEEM DETERMINED TO KEEP AT IT.

THEY HAVE A LOT OF GRIT AND IRON. I'M A BIG FAN OF THEM.



ARE YOU NEAR TO BEING DONE? I'D LIKE TO GO BACK TO SLEEP.



HERE'S THE PART THAT CONCERNS **YOU**. FABLETOWN HAS DECIDED TO ADOPT THE ISRAEL TEMPLATE IN WHOLE.

YOU'VE NO DOUBT GUESSED THAT YOU GUYS PLAY THE PART OF THE VAST POWERS ARRAYED **AGAINST** US.



EVERY TIME YOU HURT US WE'RE GOING TO DAMAGE YOU MUCH **WORSE** IN RETURN.

IT WILL ALWAYS HAPPEN. ALWAYS. YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN END THE CYCLE.



AND KEEP THIS IN MIND. YOU HAVE A HUGE **EMPIRE** TO PROTECT.

GUARD THE TEN MILLION MOST LIKELY TARGETS AND THERE WILL **STILL** BE A HUNDRED MILLION RIPE, UNPROTECTED TARGETS WE CAN HIT.



OKAY, I UNDERSTAND NOW. I'LL **PONDER** YOUR THREAT.

NOT SO FAST, OLD GAFFER. ACCOUNTS AREN'T **BALANCED** YET.

YOU STILL HAVE THE WOODEN SOLDIER RAID AGAINST FABLETOWN TO PAY FOR.



BUT YOU ALREADY KNOW YOU CAN'T HURT US.

THINK SO? I'M ABOUT TO **STICK** IT TO YOU WHERE IT HURTS MOST. SEE THIS? IT'S MUNDY MAGIC, WHICH THEY CALL HIGH-TECH. IT'S A RADIO TRANSMITTER.



IT'S ABOUT TO TALK TO ANOTHER BUNCH OF MUNDY MAGIC CALLED PLASTIC **EXPLOSIVE**, FORMED INTO ABOUT THREE DOZEN BOMBS STRAPPED TO TREE TRUNKS.

THIS WOULD BE A GOOD TIME TO **DUCK**, BECAUSE WHEN I PUSH THIS LITTLE RED BUTTON--





SOMETIME LATER...

COME ON, OLD MAN. YOUR CABIN'S STARTED TO BURN.



AND EVEN IF THOSE SPELLS PROTECT YOU FROM BURNING UP WITH IT, I **DOUBT** YOU'LL WANT TO WAIT FOR THEM TO FIND YOU TWO UNDER THE SCORCHED REMAINS.

:COUGH-COUGH!:



I'VE JUST TAKEN YOUR MAGIC GROVE AWAY FROM YOU.

YEAH, I KNOW IT'LL GROW BACK-EVENTUALLY--BUT I SUSPECT IT'LL BE AT LEAST A GENERATION BEFORE YOU CAN PRODUCE NEW WOODEN CHILDREN FROM IT.



THAT'S YOUR PUNISHMENT FOR INVADING FABLETOWN. SEE HOW WE DID **MUCH** WORSE TO YOU THAN YOU DID TO US?

DO YOURSELF A BIG FAVOR AND LEARN THE LESSON HERE.



THAT WAS THE STICK, NOW HERE'S THE CARROT. MOST OF THE HEADS FROM YOUR INVASION FORCE ARE STILL ALIVE.

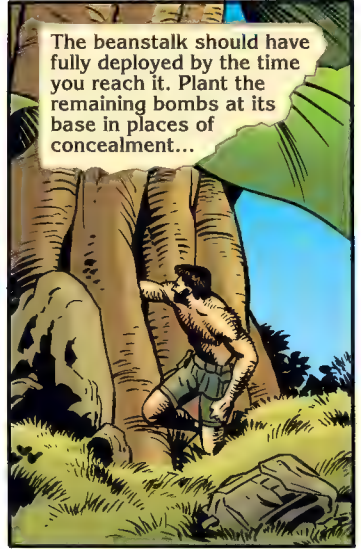
WE MIGHT BE WILLING TO EXCHANGE THEM FOR THINGS WE WANT--IF YOU CAN CONVINCE US YOU'RE INCLINED TO BE **NICE** FROM NOW ON.

Stage Five: Extraction.

After completion of all objectives, return to the extraction point as quickly as possible, no matter the time of day.



The beanstalk should have fully deployed by the time you reach it. Plant the remaining bombs at its base in places of concealment...



...to avoid detection from any forces that might give chase.



CLIMB FASTER, YOU FILTHY GOBS, OR THE EMPEROR WILL KILL EVERY BLOODY ONE OF YOU!



Be sure to activate the radio detonator while still in the Empire dimension to ensure a good signal.





Your final ascent will be up the secondary escape line.



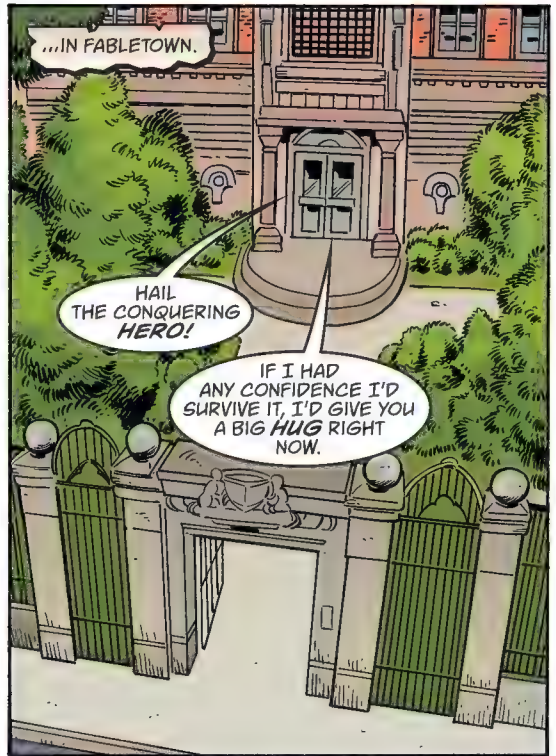
Don't forget to grab it before destroying the beanstalk.



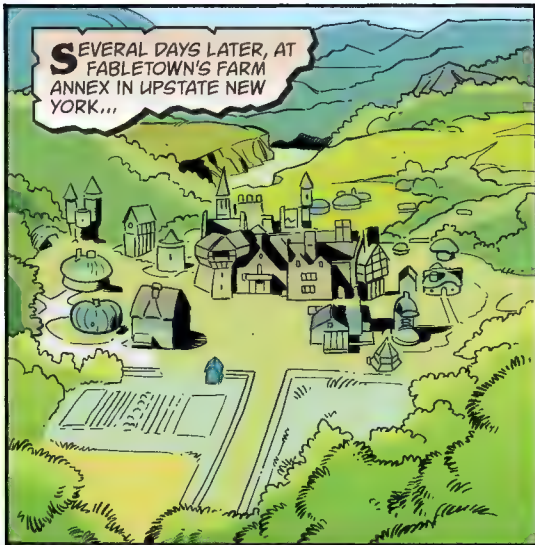
End of mission briefing. Good luck and be careful, Bigby.



CHAPTER FIVE: HOME IS THE HUNTER





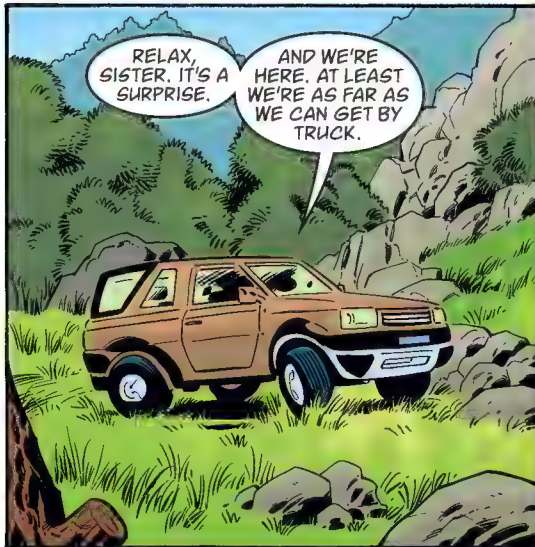


SEVERAL DAYS LATER, AT FABLETOWN'S FARM ANNEX IN UPSTATE NEW YORK...



OKAY, WILL YOU PLEASE TELL ME NOW WHERE WE'RE GOING?

I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT THE BIG SECRET'S ALL ABOUT.



RELAX, SISTER. IT'S A SURPRISE.

AND WE'RE HERE. AT LEAST WE'RE AS FAR AS WE CAN GET BY TRUCK.



WE WALK FROM HERE--OR, TO BE MORE PRECISE, YOU DO.

I WISH YOU'D DRESSED BETTER, SNOW.

SORRY, BUT WHEN I CHOSE MY ENSEMBLE THIS MORNING--

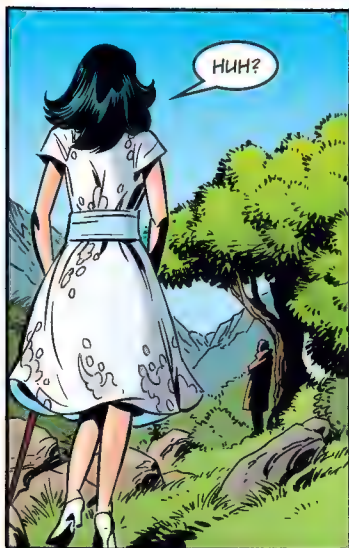
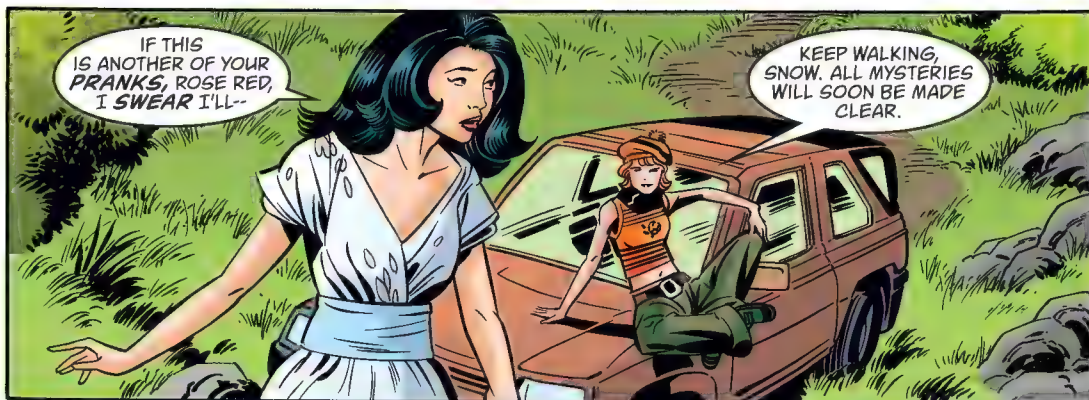
--I DIDN'T REALIZE YOU'D BE KIDNAPPING ME FOR A WILDERNESS ADVENTURE.



AND WHAT DO YOU MEAN? I WALK ALONE FROM HERE?

HEAD THAT WAY, SIS. I'LL BE WAITING HERE WHEN YOU'RE READY TO COME BACK.

CHAPTER SIX: RESTORATION



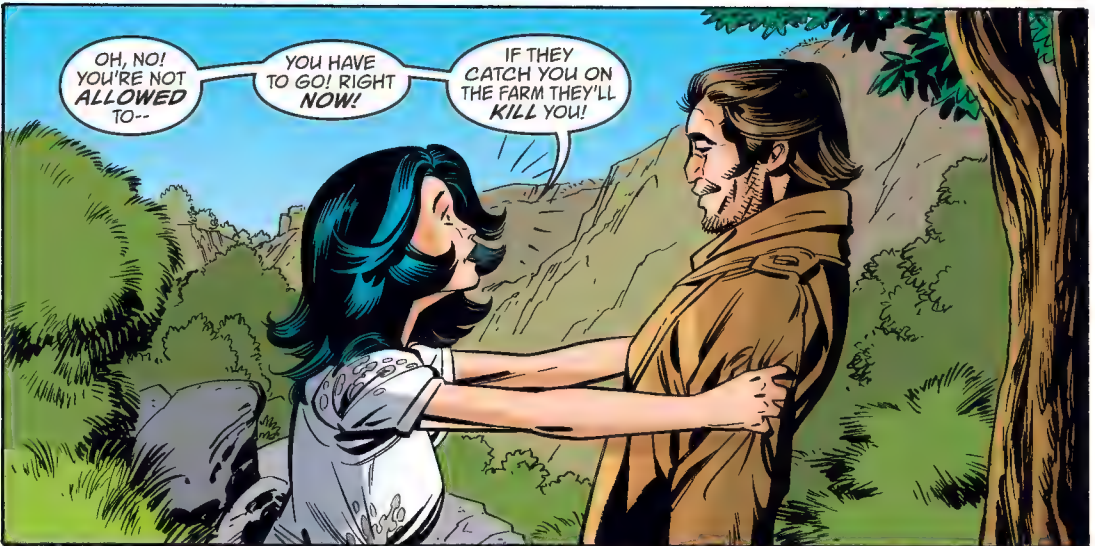


BIGBY!



HELLO, SNOW.

YOU CAME BACK! YOU'RE HERE! YOU--!



OH, NO! YOU'RE NOT ALLOWED TO--

YOU HAVE TO GO! RIGHT NOW!

IF THEY CATCH YOU ON THE FARM THEY'LL KILL YOU!



SETTLE DOWN, SNOW. YOU'RE BABBLING.

BUT--

I KNOW I'M NOT ALLOWED ON THE FARM, BUT THIS ISN'T THE FARM.



OF COURSE IT IS!

NOT ANY LONGER. FROM NOW ON, THE FARM ENDS WHERE ROSE RED DROPPED YOU OFF.

THIS AREA BELONGS TO ME NOW-- OR US, IF YOU LIKE.



I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

I BOUGHT THIS LAND FROM FABLETOWN, IN RETURN FOR ENDING A WAR--OR MAYBE *STARTING* ONE. I GUESS WE'LL SEE.

COME ON. TAKE A WALK WITH ME. I WANT TO SHOW YOU A THING OR TWO.



WAIT!

THERE'S SOMETHING I NEED TO--

BIGBY, DID OUR SON FIND YOU?



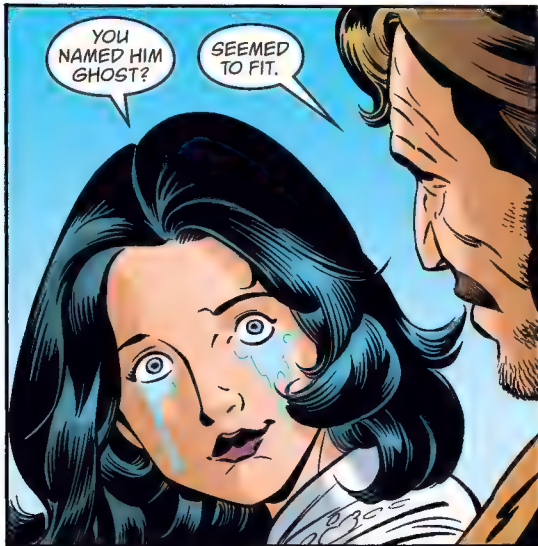
OF COURSE.

GHOST, GIVE YOUR MOTHER A KISS.

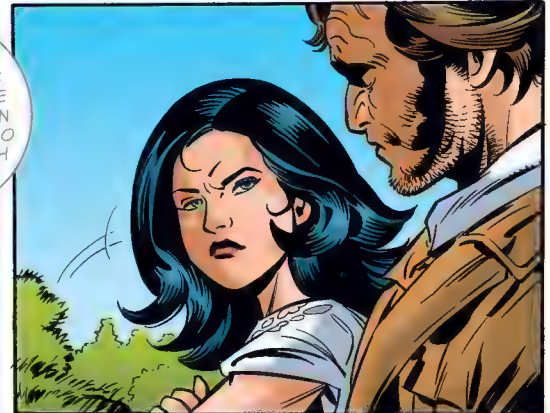
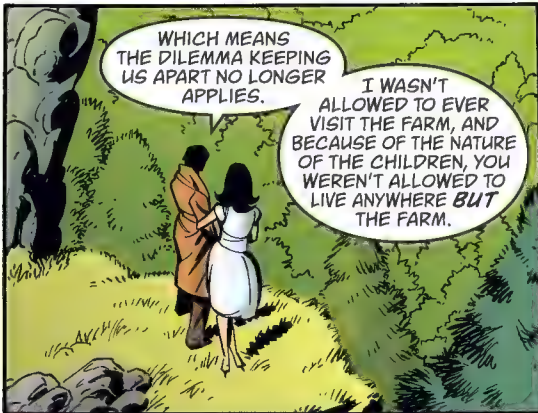
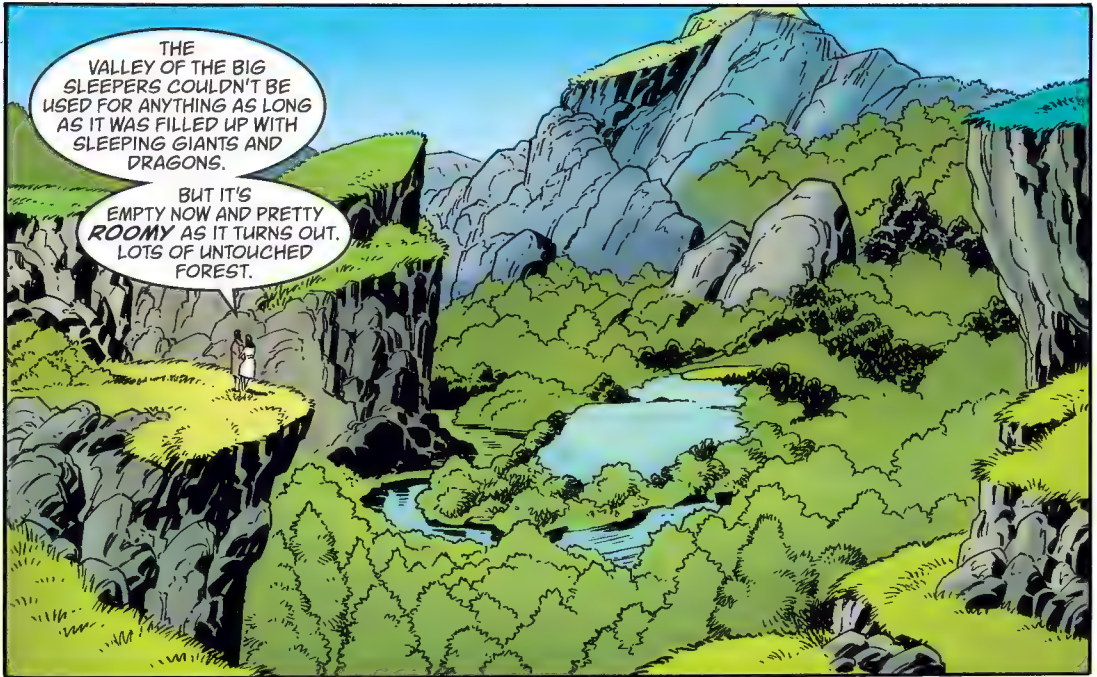


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SWUFF



CHAPTER SEVEN: THE BIG VALLEY





OKAY, THAT'S A CONVERSATION WE NEED TO HAVE REAL SOON.

BUT FIRST THINGS FIRST.



SINCE THERE ARE SO MANY NATURAL CAVES IN THESE HILLS, I DECIDED TO USE ONE TO KEEP CERTAIN THINGS HIDDEN.



YOU HAVE SOME WORK TO DO BEFORE I CAN LET YOU SEE THE KIDS--OUR OTHER KIDS.

FIRST SOME READING. THIS BOX IS FULL OF ALL THE LETTERS THEY WROTE YOU. EACH ONE HAS A COPY OF YOUR REPLY PAPER-CLIPPED TO IT.



THEN YOU CAN UNWRAP ALL THE GIFTS THEY SENT YOU FOR CHRISTMAS, BIRTHDAYS, AND FATHER'S DAY.

MAKE DAMN SURE YOU MEMORIZE WHO GAVE YOU WHAT.



AND FINALLY WE'LL GO OVER THE GIFTS YOU SENT THEM, SO IT DOESN'T COME AS A COMPLETE SURPRISE TO YOU WHEN THEY MENTION THEM.

GOT IT.

LATER...

WE CAN TALK ABOUT HER IN DETAIL IF YOU LIKE, BUT THE GIST IS THIS.

SARAH'S ONE OF THE WAYS I TRIED TO FORGET YOU. I ALSO TRIED BOOZE AND SOLITUDE.

NOTHING WORKED. HOW COULD IT?



SO HERE IT IS, ONE LAST TIME AND THEN I'LL LEAVE YOU ALONE FOREVER, IF *THAT'S* WHAT YOU DECIDE.

I LOVE YOU, SNOW, AND HAVE SINCE THE HOUR WE FIRST MET.



HELL, I WANTED YOU EVEN BEFORE THEN, SINCE BEFORE WE EXISTED.

AS IF EVERY MOVEMENT OF EVERY STAR AND PLANET, EVERY TICK OF CREATION'S CLOCK OCCURRED ONLY SO THAT WE COULD SOMEDAY FIND EACH OTHER.

BIGBY, I--



I'M CERTAINLY NO HANDSOME PRINCE, COME TO STEAL YOU AWAY FROM ALL THE CARES OF THE WORLD. I CAN NEVER OFFER YOU RICHES AND PALACES OR ANY SORT OF LUXURY.

BUT I THINK YOU'VE HAD YOUR FILL OF SUCH THINGS BY NOW.



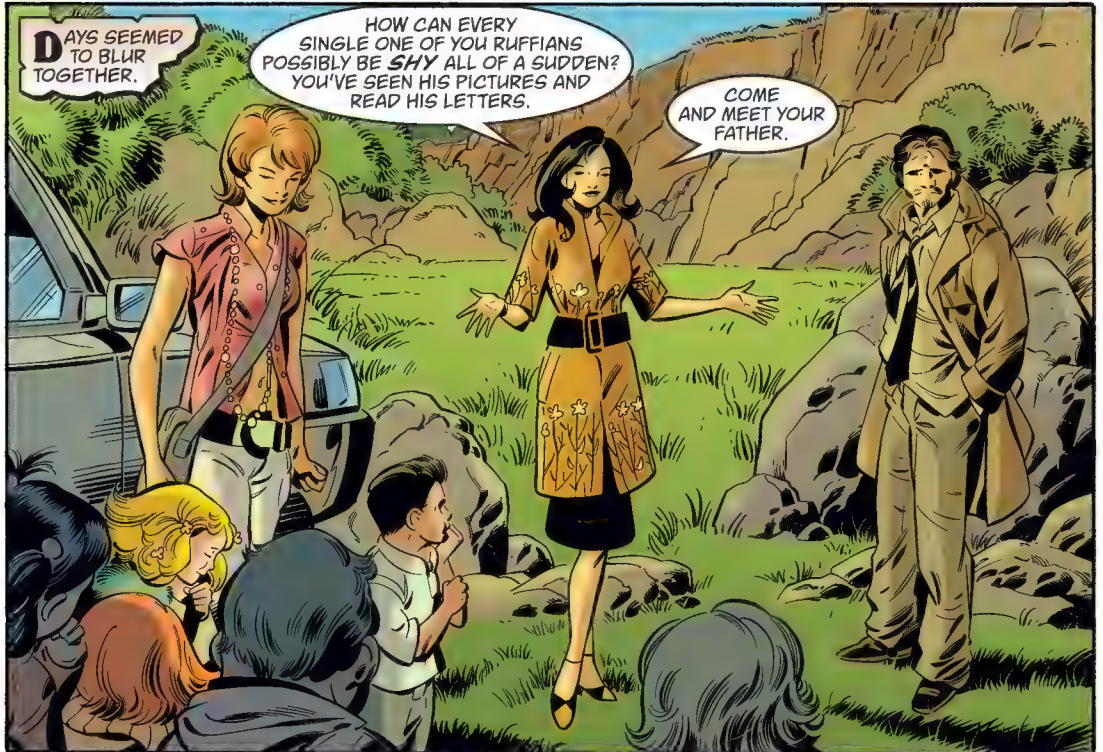
WHAT I CAN OFFER YOU IS A HOME IN *OUR* VALLEY, WHERE WE CAN RAISE *OUR* KIDS.

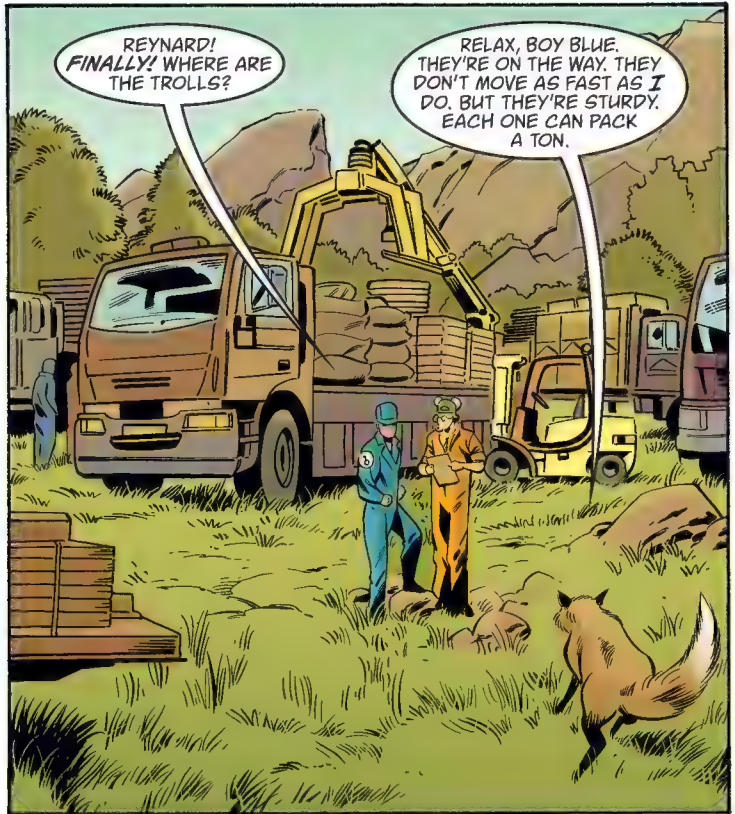
AND I'M OLD-FASHIONED ENOUGH THAT I THINK WE SHOULD BE MARRIED TO DO IT.

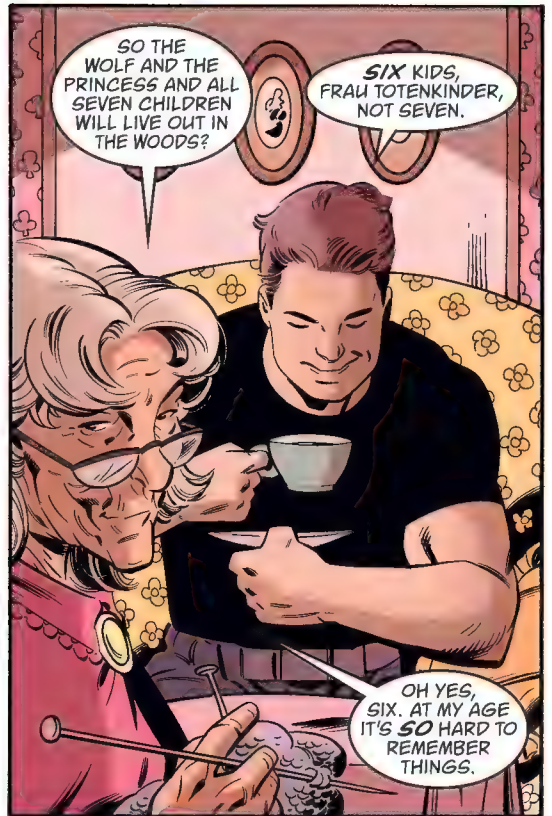
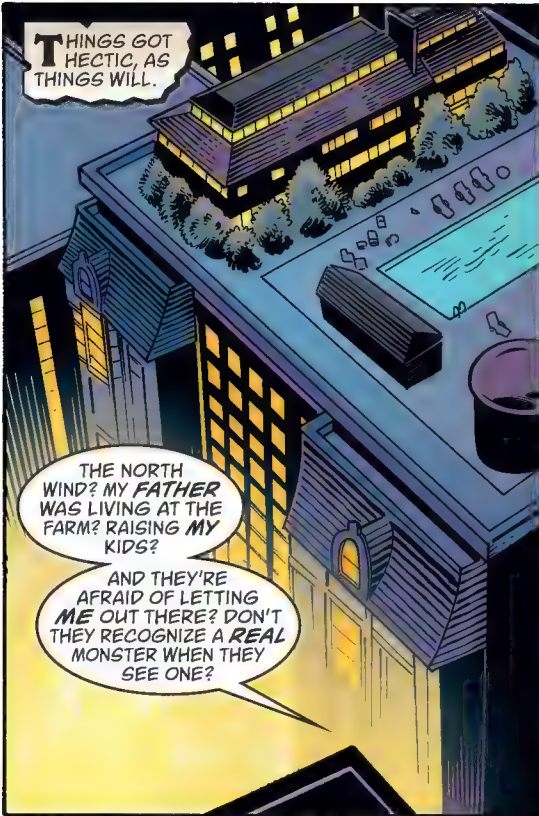


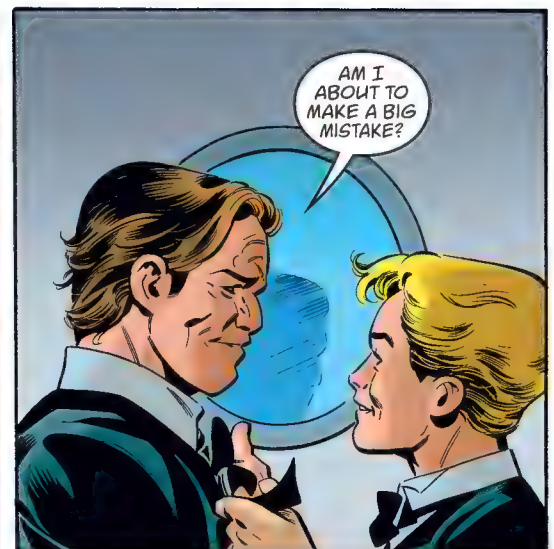


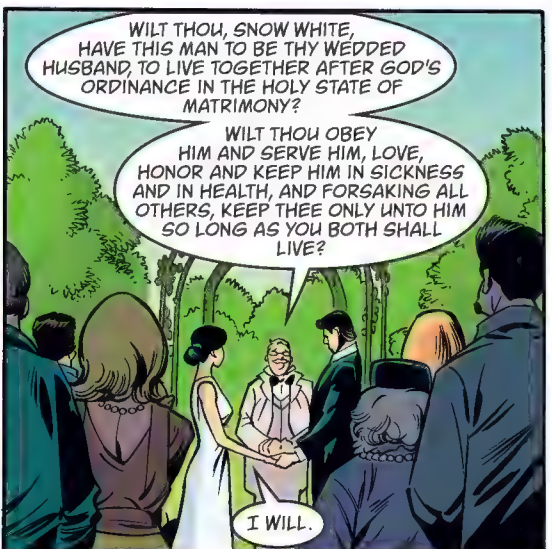
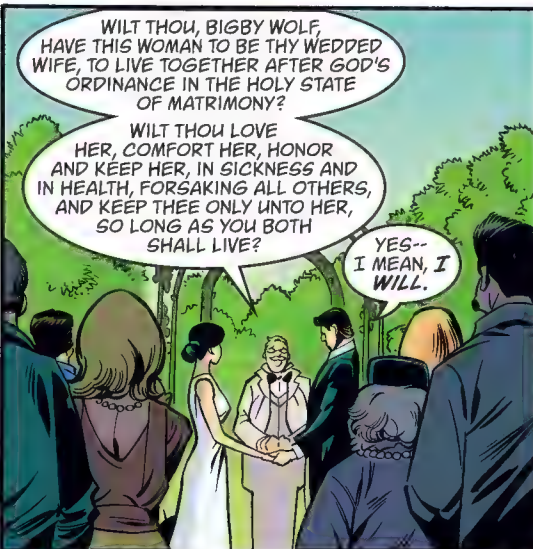
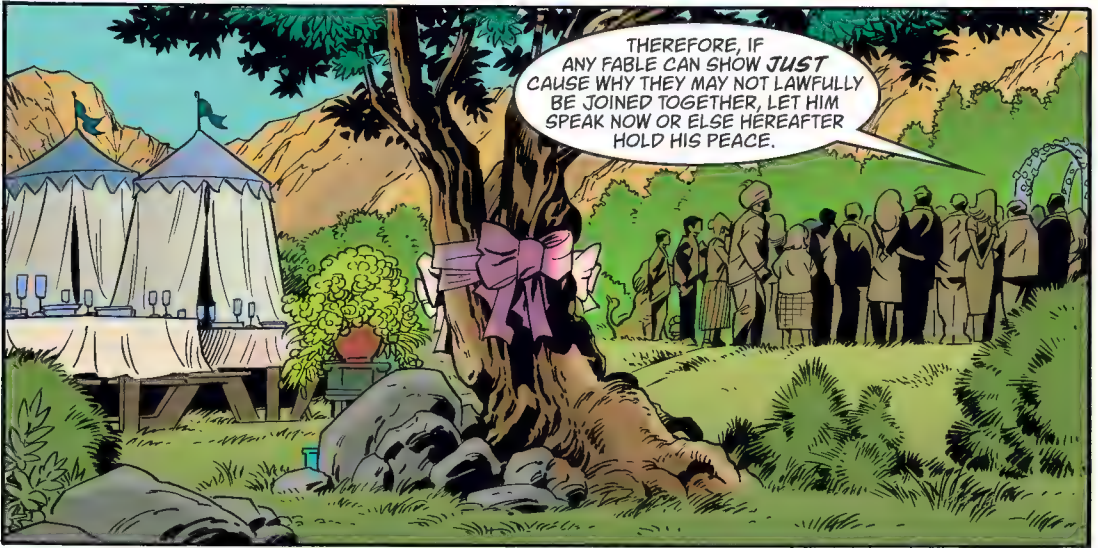
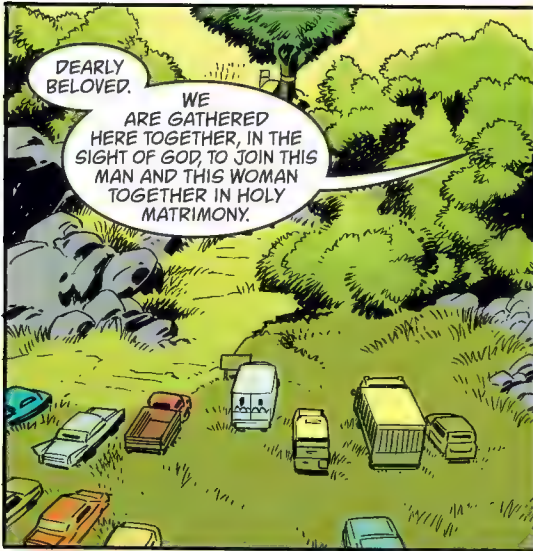
CHAPTER EIGHT: THE WEDDING







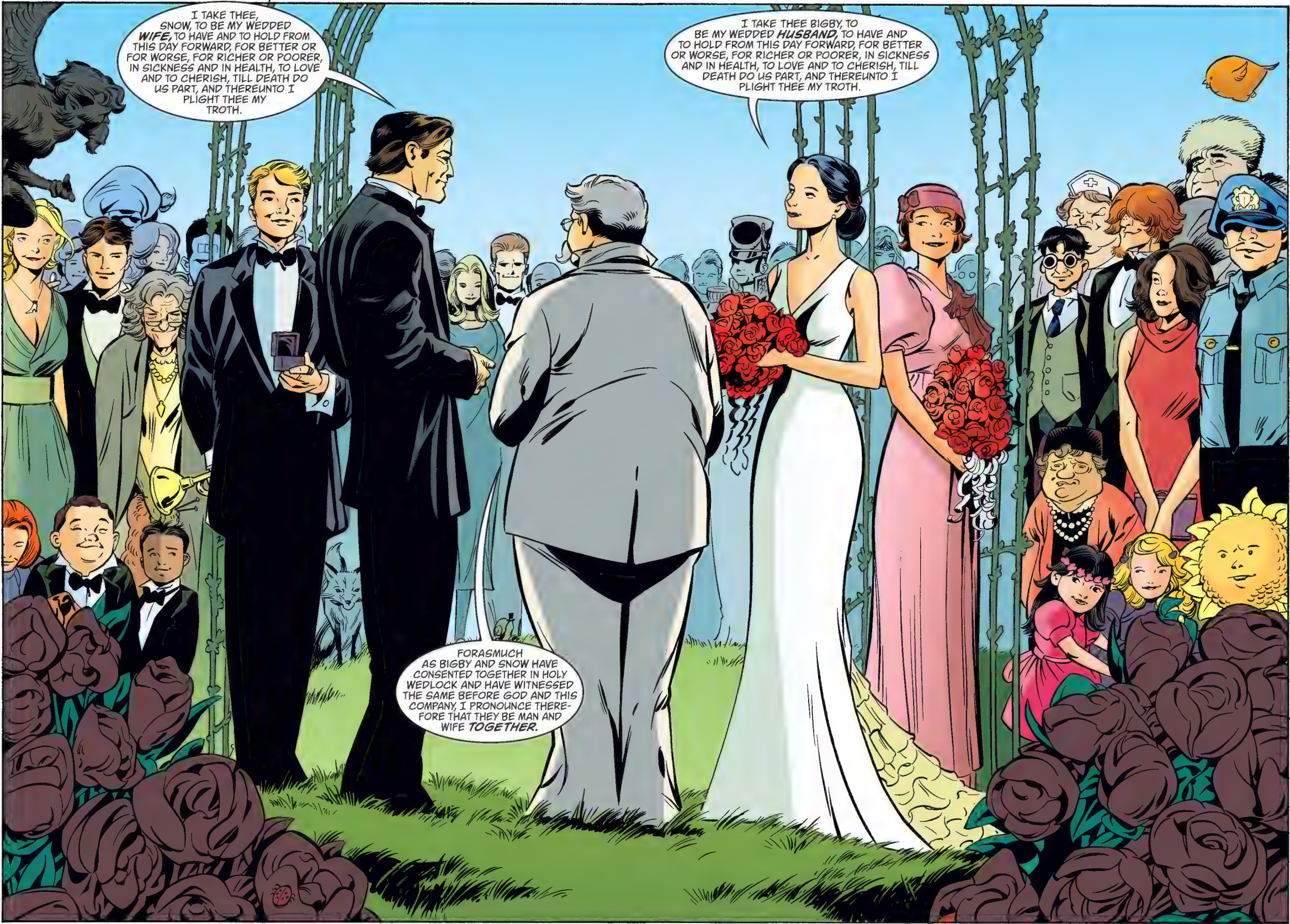


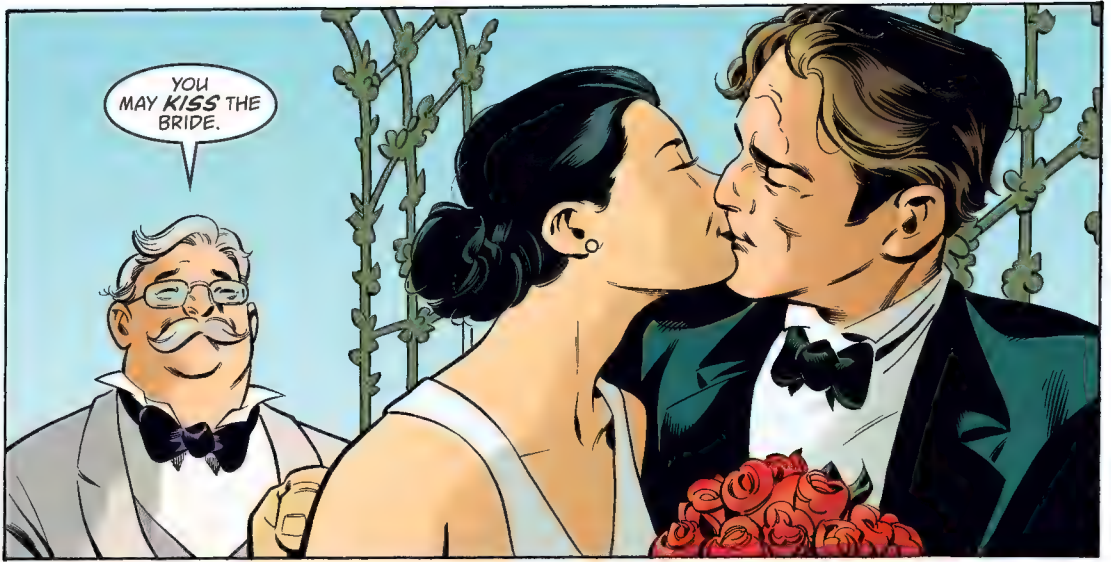


I TAKE THEE, SNOW, TO BE MY WEDDED WIFE, TO HAVE AND TO HOLD FROM THIS DAY FORWARD, FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE, FOR RICHER OR POORER, IN SICKNESS AND IN HEALTH, TO LOVE AND TO CHERISH, TILL DEATH DO US PART, AND THEREUNTO I PLIGHT THEE MY TROTH.

I TAKE THEE BIGBY, TO BE MY WEDDED HUSBAND, TO HAVE AND TO HOLD FROM THIS DAY FORWARD, FOR BETTER OR WORSE, FOR RICHER OR POORER, IN SICKNESS AND IN HEALTH, TO LOVE AND TO CHERISH, TILL DEATH DO US PART, AND THEREUNTO I PLIGHT THEE MY TROTH.

FORASMUCH AS BIGBY AND SNOW HAVE CONSENTED TOGETHER IN HOLY WEDLOCK AND HAVE WITNESSED THE SAME BEFORE GOD AND THIS COMPANY, I PRONOUNCE THEREFORE THAT THEY BE MAN AND WIFE TOGETHER.





YOU
MAY KISS THE
BRIDE.

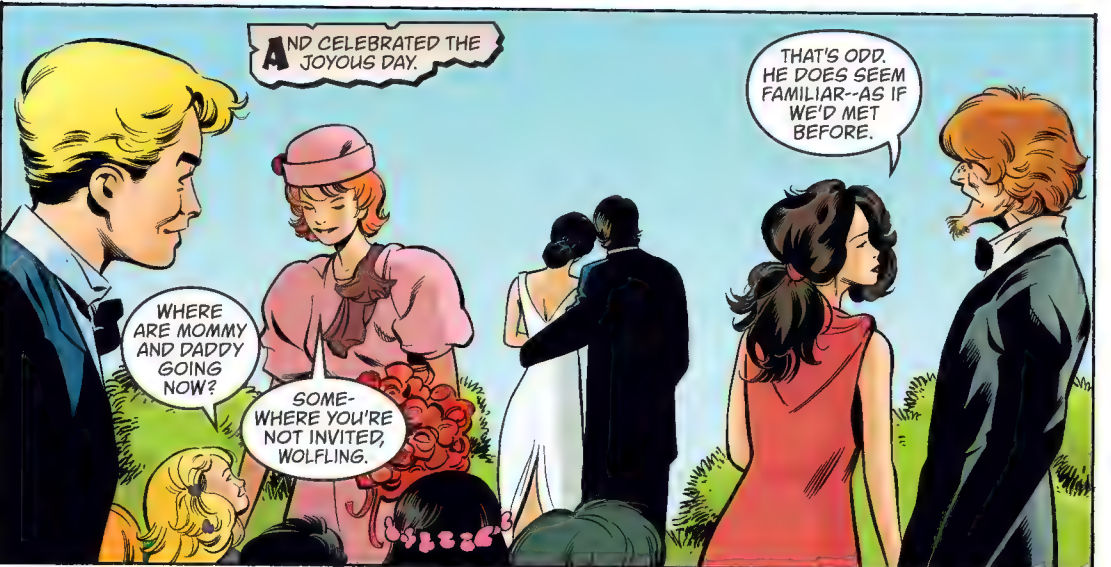


SO THEY
FEASTED.



AND TOASTED EACH
OTHER.

TO THE
FINEST MAN AND
THE FINEST WOMAN IT
HAS BEEN MY **GOOD**
FORTUNE TO
KNOW.



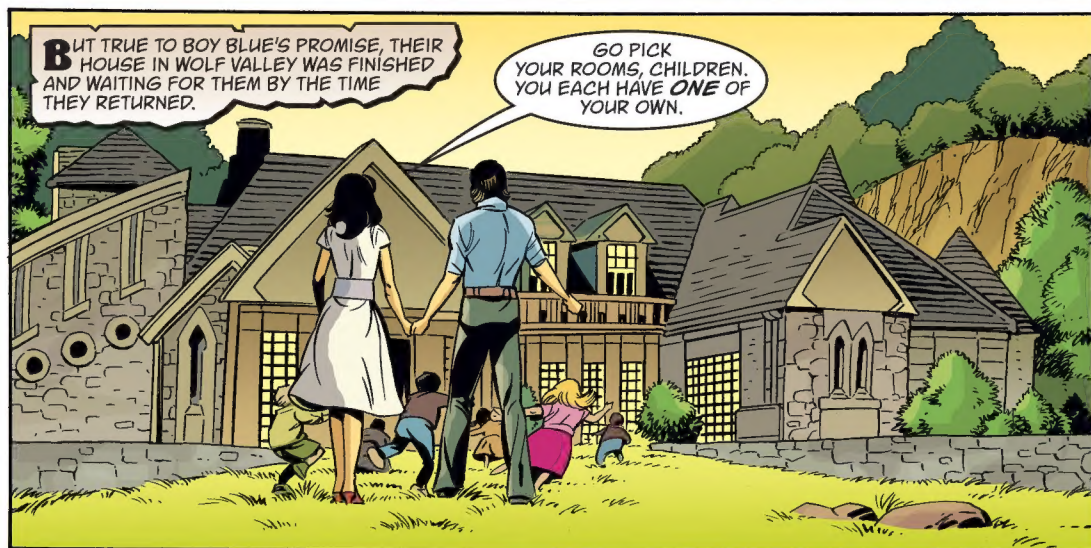
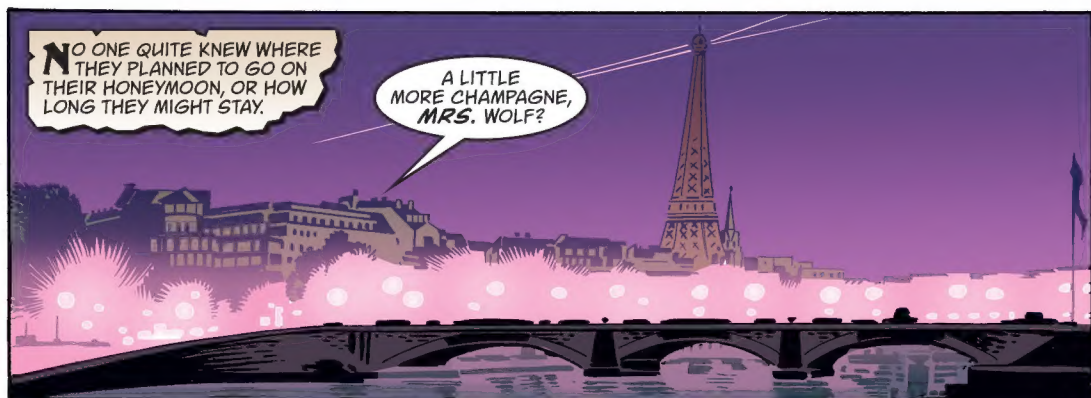
AND CELEBRATED THE
JOYOUS DAY.

WHERE
ARE MOMMY
AND DADDY
GOING
NOW?

SOME-
WHERE YOU'RE
NOT INVITED,
WOLFLING.

THAT'S ODD.
HE DOES SEEM
FAMILIAR--AS IF
WE'D MET
BEFORE.

EPILOGUE: MR. AND MRS. WOLF





Happily Ever After

Bill Willingham: *Mark Buckingham:* *Steve Leialoha & Andrew Depoy:*
writer/creator *penciller* *inkers*
Lee Loughridge: *Todd Klein:* *James Jean:* *Angela Rufino:* *Shelly Bond:*
colors *letters* *cover* *assistant editor* *editor*

The creators and publishers of Fables would like to thank you, our readers, for your loyalty, encouragement and reliable "what happens next" interest in these first fifty issues. We'll see you next month when the next fifty begin.

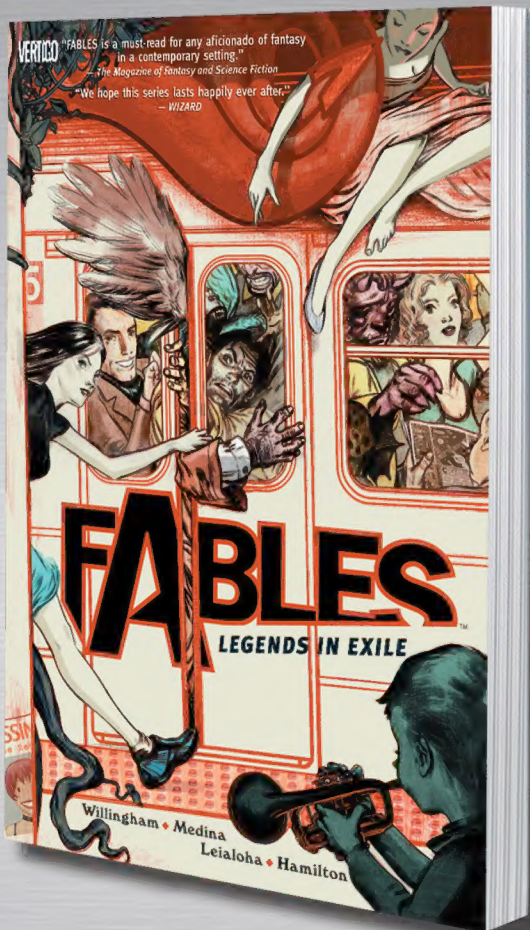
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BILL WILLINGHAM

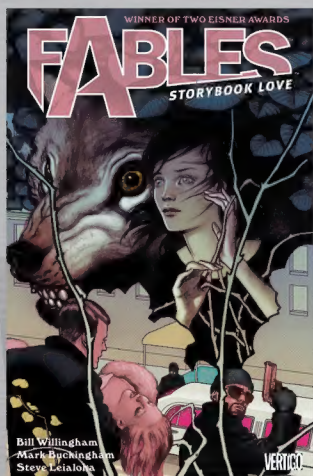
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- VOL. 6: HOMELANDS
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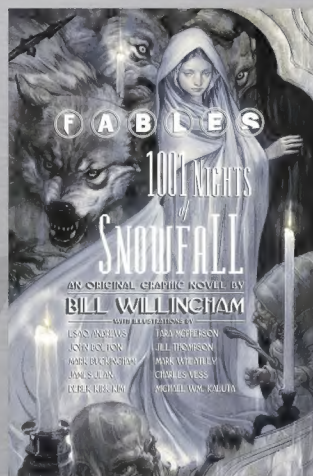
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STORYBOOK LOVE



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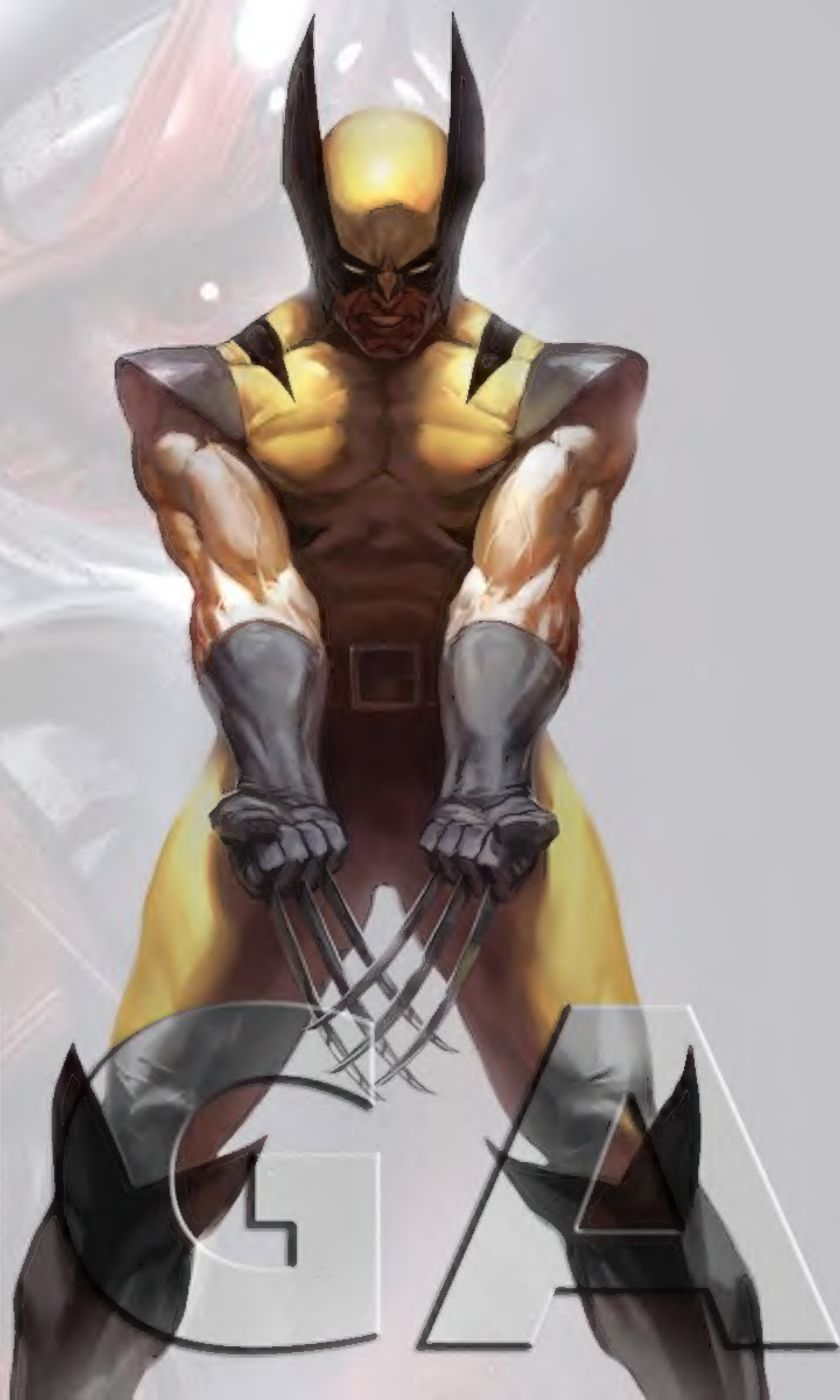


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NATHAN